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August 3, 2013

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Room TW-A325
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: **Ex parte filing** in WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On July 29, 2013, Doug Neal of OTZ Telephone Cooperative and Charlie Carpenter of Arctic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative, Inc. (ASTAC) met with Nick Degani, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Pai, Commissioner Ajit Pai, Andrea Sanders from Senator Begich's office, Peter Lewis from Senator Murkowski's office and Jason Suslavich from Congressman Young's office.

Commissioner Pai was thanked for the interim relief for Alaska with suspension of QRA benchmarking for the remainder of 2013 and 2014 and an offer was extended to assist the Wireline Competition Bureau in understanding the realities of operating and constructing in Alaska. Specific examples of erroneous assumptions and data were used to highlight the need for collaboration and transparency in the process going forward to return Alaska operating companies on a sustainable path in the USF reform process. The balance of this meeting was spent discussing the middle mile challenges that continue to plague Alaska and some possible alternative solutions.

On August 1, 2013, Commissioner Pai, his legal advisor Nick Degani, Andrea Sanders from Senator Begich's office, Peter Lewis from Senator Murkowski's office and Jason Suslavich from Congressman Young's office visited Barrow Alaska and met throughout the day with Tina Pidgeon and two of her staff from GCI, Brenda Shepard from TelAlaska, Mike Todd and Jim Johnsen from ACS, Elizabeth Pierce from Quintillion Networks, LLC, Paul Bodfish, Board President for ASTAC and the undersigned. The day started with an aerial flightseeing tour of Atqasuk, an insular village of approximately 270 residents 60 miles from Barrow. Mr. Bodfish, who is a resident of Atqasuk accompanied the Commissioner, his staff and the Alaska Delegation staff and described the challenges of living in remote Alaska, unconnected by roads to any other community.

Following the Atqasuk flight, a tour of Tuzzy Consortium Library was given by library staff and Ilisagavik College President Pearl Brower. The importance of Schools and Libraries continued funding was stressed as the cost of satellite middle mile transport is extremely high, approximately \$44,000 per month, according to President Brower. A demonstration of the inadequacy of the existing bandwidth was made trying to open a YouTube video, which buffered for several minutes. Following the library tour, a luncheon

and briefing session ensued. The state OWL video conferencing network was demonstrated with David Ongley, Library Director, video conferencing in from Glennallen Alaska. Mr. Ongley discussed the importance of Schools and Libraries funding for remote Alaska and expressed concerns for proposed changes to the program. Next, Quintillion Networks LLC CEO Elizabeth Pierce provided information on a privately funded, undersea fiber project (<http://arcticfibre.com>) that is being constructed in 2013 - 2014 and which plans to bring fiber optic landings to the North Slope and Northwest Arctic Boroughs and the Seward Peninsula of Alaska later in 2015. She pointed out the preliminary pricing and capacity for connectivity to this fiber is vastly superior to the existing satellite middle mile. A number of questions pertaining to the project were answered. Following this presentation, a listening session ensued with invited leadership from the North Slope Borough and North Slope Borough School District briefing Commissioner Pai on the needs and uses of bandwidth in remote rural Alaska. A number of questions were asked which Commissioner Pai and his legal advisor answered.

Following the luncheon, a cultural tour of the Heritage Whaling Museum was given to the group by Ms. Patuk Brower, curator for the museum.

The next event for the day was a briefing and tour of Ilisagavik College, the only Tribal College in Alaska by President Brower and staff. The various programs that would lead to AA degrees in vocational, business and IT fields were discussed as well as other initiatives being undertaken by the college. Muktuk, an Inupiat delicacy consisting of the skin and blubber of a bowhead whale, was served to the group.

The final activity of the day was a tour of the soon to be opened Arctic Slope Native Association Hospital.

As required by the Commission's rules, this ex parte record is now filed in the above referenced docket. If there are any questions, please call me at 907-563-3989.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Stephen Merriam, CEO
Arctic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative, Inc.

Copy to:
Nick Degani